

Notice of Intent to Repatriate a Cultural Item in the Possession of the Denver Art Museum

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior

ACTION: Notice

Notice is hereby given under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 of the intent to repatriate a cultural item in the possession of the Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, that meets the definition of "sacred object" under section 2 of the act.

The Elk Tongue Beaver Bundle consists of animal bodies or skins, a beaver tail, a buffalo tail, a feather fan, a pipe stem and catlinite bowl, beaded bags, forked sticks, split sticks, and eight rawhide rattles in a corn husk bag, all surrounded by a painted leather wrapping and a red plaid shawl. The original owner was Elk Tongue, a northern Piegan. The bundle was subsequently transferred through a series of bundle keepers -- Hairy Belly, Not Good, Scraping White, Wolf Bull, and Little Dog -- before being sold to Madge Hardin Walters of San Diego, CA. The Denver Art Museum purchased the bundle from Ms. Walters in 1940.

Evidence provided by the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, on the behalf of Mr. George G. Kipp, III, and Mrs. Melinda Kipp, confirms that the Elk Tongue Beaver Bundle is needed by traditional Blackfeet religious leaders for the practice of traditional Blackfeet religion by present day adherents. The Pikuni Traditionalist Association, Chief Leonard Bastien of the Piegan Nation, Alberta, Canada, and the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council unanimously support Mr. and Mrs. Kipp as the appropriate bundle keepers. The Denver Art Museum's Collection Committee and Board of Trustees has reviewed the request for repatriation and has no objection. The Elk Tongue Beaver Bundle has been loaned to the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, on the behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Kipp, pending publication of this notice.

Authorities of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service have been contacted regarding applicability of Federal endangered species statutes to this transfer and have concurred in the conclusion that the object is not covered due to its age.

Representatives of any other Indian tribe that believes itself to be culturally affiliated with this object should contact Dr. Nancy J. Blomberg, Curator of Native Arts, Denver Art Museum, 100 W. 14th Avenue Parkway, Denver, CO 80204, telephone: (303) 839-4806 before August 19, 1994. Repatriation of the object to the Blackfeet Nation, on behalf of George and Melinda Kipp, may begin after that date if no additional claimants come forward.

Dated: July 14, 1994

Dr. Francis P. McManamon
Departmental Consulting Archeologist
Chief, Archeological Assistance Division
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